

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 TRSE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5278
SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
DSAA WASHDC PRIORITY
INFO USMISSION USNATO
USNMR SHAPE
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 04256

SECDEF FOR ISA/OSDR&E

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MARR, MPOL, NATO, BE
SUBJECT: BELGIAN HAWK: STATUS AS OF MARCH 3

REF: BRUSSELS 3015

1. ACCORDING TO A KNOWLEDGEABLE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT SOURCE LITTLE PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE IN RESOLVING THE ISSUE OF BELGIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE IMPROVED HAWK PROGRAM.
2. THE PRINCIPAL OPPOSITION TO PARTICIPATION IS STILL SOME ELEMENTS WITHIN THE BELGIAN SOCIALIST PARTY. THE CHRISTIAN SOCIALISTS (TINDEMANS'CVP AND VANDEN BOEYNANTS' PSC) HAVE NOT TAKEN A PUBLIC PARTY POSITION ON HAWK. THE PERSONAL MESSAGE TRANSMITTED STATE 42974 (NOTAL) HAS MADE ITS ROUND OF KEY MINISTRIES AND HAS BEEN CHARACTERIZED TO US AS "HELPFUL". THE MINISTRY OF
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DEFENSE IS REMAINING IN TOUCH WITH RAYTHEON AND THE BELGIANS ARE AWARE THAT THEIR DELAY IN REACHING A DECISION WILL COST THEM EXTRA IF THEY EVENTUALLY DECIDE TO PARTICIPATE IN IMPROVED-HAWK. THEY ARE NOT UPSET AT THIS PROSPECT. MINISTER OF DEFENSE VANDEN BOEYNANTS IS ABSENT FROM BRUSSELS UNTIL THE WEEK OF MARCH 5, AND SO NO DECISION IS IN THE IMMEDIATE OFFING.

3. COMMENT: PUBLIC ATTENTION TO THE HAWK ISSUE HAS,
AT LEAST FOR THE MOMENT, TAPERED OFF TO PRACTICALLY
NOTHING - WHICH IS A GOOD THING AS IT MAY PERMIT THE
TRADITIONAL BELGIAN POLITICAL PROCESS TO WORK OUT A
BACKROOM COMPROMISE. NEITHER WE (NOR OUR BELGIAN SOURCES)
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CAN PREDICT THE DATE OF THE DECISION BUT WE REMAIN
GUARDEDLY OPTIMISTIC ON THE NATURE OF THE FINAL OUTCOME.
END COMMENT. CHAMBERS

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